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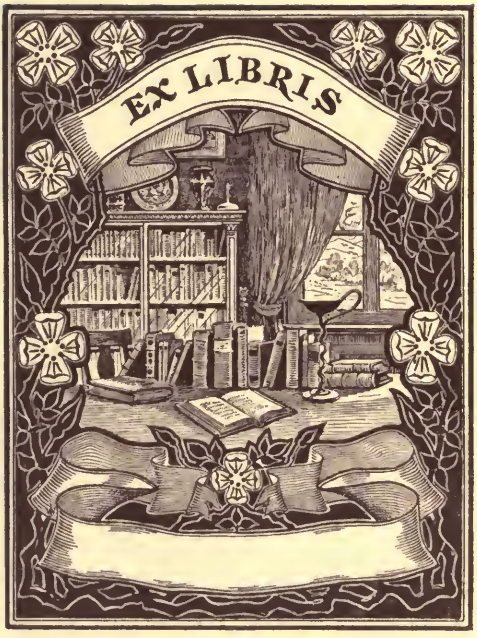
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THE WORKS
OF
ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON

CENTENARY EDITION

ILLUSTRATED

G·P·PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

Poet-Laureate Edition

The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson

With a Preface by

Elisabeth Luther Cary

Together with Various Critical Introductions

Illustrated in Photogravure from Original Designs by

Frederick Simpson Coburn

and

Gustave Doré

In Eight Volumes

②

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English Idyls

and Other Poems

Introduction to English Idyls

By John Churton Collins

IN surveying these poems two things must strike every one—their wide range and their very fragmentary character. There is scarcely any side of life on which they do not touch, scarcely any phase of passion and emotion to which they do not give expression. Take the love poems: compare *Fatima* with *Isabel*, *The Miller's Daughter* with *Locksley Hall*, *The Gardener's Daughter* with *Madeline*, or *Mariana* with Cleopatra in the *Dream of Fair Women*. When did love find purer and nobler expression than in *Love and Duty*? When has sorrow found utterance more perfect than in the verses *To J. S.*, or the passion for the past than in *Break, Break, Break*, or revenge and jealousy than in *The Sisters*? In *The Two Voices*, *The Palace of Art* and *The Vision of Sin* we are in another sphere. They are appeals to the soul of man on subjects of momentous concern to him. And each is a masterpiece. What is proper to philosophy and what is proper to poetry have never perhaps been

so happily blended. They have all the sensuous charm of Keats, but the prose of Hume could not have presented the truths which they are designed to convey with more lucidity and precision. In that superb fragment the *Morte d'Arthur* we have many of the noblest attributes of Epic poetry. *Oenone* is the perfection of the classical idyl, *The Gardener's Daughter* and the idyls that follow it of the romantic. *Sir Galahad* and *St. Agnes* are in the vein of Keats and Coleridge, but Keats and Coleridge have produced nothing more exquisite and nothing more ethereal. *The Lotos Eaters* is perhaps the most purely delicious poem ever written, the *ne plus ultra* of sensuous loveliness, and yet the poet who gave us that has given us also the political poems, poems as trenchant and austerely dignified in style as they are pregnant with practical wisdom. There is the same versatility displayed in the trifles.

But all is fragmentary. No thread strings these jewels. They form a collection of gems unset and unarranged. Without any system or any definite scope they have nothing of that unity in diversity which is so perceptible in the lyrics and minor poems of Goethe and Wordsworth. Capricious as the gyrations of a seagull seem the poet's moods and movements. We have now the reveries of a love-sick maiden, now the picture of a soul wrestling with despair and death; here a study from rural life, or a study in character, there a sermon

on politics, or a descent into the depths of psychological truth, or a sketch from nature. But nothing could be more concentrated than the power employed to shape each fragment into form. What Pope says of the *Aeneid* may be applied with very literal truth to these poems:—

> Finish'd the whole, and laboured every part
> With patient touches of unwearied art.

In the poems of 1842 we have the secret of Tennyson's eminence as a poet as well as the secret of his limitations. He appears to have been constitutionally deficient in what the Greeks called *architektonikê*, combination and disposition on a large scale. The measure of his power as a constructive artist is given us in the poem in which the English idyls may be said to culminate, namely, *Enoch Arden*. *In Memoriam* and the *Idylls of the King* have a sort of spiritual unity, but they are a series of fragments tacked rather than fused together. It is the same with *Maud*, and it is the same with *The Princess*. His poems have always a tendency to resolve themselves into a series of cameos: it is only the short poems which have organic unity. A gift of felicitous and musical expression which is absolutely marvellous; an instinctive sympathy with what is best and most elevated in the sphere of ordinary life, of ordinary thought and sentiment, of ordinary activity, with consummate representative power; a most rare faculty

of seizing and fixing in very perfect form what is commonly so inexpressible because so impalpable and evanescent in emotion and expression; a power of catching and rendering the charm of nature with a fidelity and vividness which resemble magic; and lastly, unrivalled skill in choosing, repolishing, and remounting the gems which are our common inheritance from the past: these are the gifts which will secure permanence for his work as long as the English language lasts.

In his power of crystallising commonplaces he stands next to Pope, in subtle felicity of expression beside Virgil. And when he says of Virgil that we find in his diction "all the grace of all the muses often flowering in one lonely word," he says what is literally true of his own work. As a master of style his place is in the first rank among English classical poets. But his style is the perfection of art. His diction, like the diction of Milton and Gray, resembles mosaic work. With a touch here and a touch there, now from memory, now from unconscious assimilation, inlaying here an epithet and there a phrase, adding, subtracting, heightening, modifying, substituting one metaphor for another, developing what is latent in the suggestive imagery of a predecessor, laying under contribution the most intimate familiarity with what is best in the literature of the ancient and modern world, the unwearied artist toils patiently on till his precious mosaic work is without a flaw. All the resources of rhetoric are employed to

give distinction to his style and every figure in rhetoric finds expression in his diction: Hypallage as in

> *The pillar'd dusk* of sounding sycamores.
> —*Audley Court.*

Paronomasia as in

> The seawind sang
> *Shrill, chill,* with flakes of foam.
> —*Morte d'Arthur.*

Oxymoron as

> *Behold* them *unbeheld, unheard*
> *Hear* all.
> —*Oenone*

Hyperbaton as in

> The *dew-impearled* winds of dawn.
> —*Ode to Memory.*

Metonymy as in

> The *bright death* quiver'd at the victim's throat.
> —*Dream of Fair Women.*

or in

> For some three *careless moons*
> The summer pilot of an empty heart.
> —*Gardener's Daughter.*

No poet since Milton has employed what is known as Onomatopœia with so much effect. Not to go farther than the poems of 1842, we have in the *Morte d' Arthur:*

So all day long the noise of battle *rolled*
Among the mountains by the winter sea;

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And *barren chasms,* and all to left and right
The *bare black cliff clang'd round* him, as he bas'd
His feet *on juts of slippery crag that rang*
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —

or the exquisite

I heard the *water lapping on the crag,*
And the *long ripple washing in the reeds.*

So in *The Dying Swan*,

And the *wavy swell of the soughing reeds.*

See too the whole of *Oriana* and the description of the dance at the beginning of *The Vision of Sin.*

Assonance, alliteration, the revival or adoption of obsolete and provincial words, the transplantation of phrases and idioms from the Greek and Latin languages, the employment of common words in uncommon senses, all are pressed into the service of adding distinction to his diction. His diction blends the two extremes of simplicity and artificiality, but with such fine tact that this strange combination has seldom the effect of incongruity.

From "The Early Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson."

The Epic

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd; and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world: "at home was little left,

And none abroad; there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."
" And I," quoth Everard, " by the wassail-bowl."
" Why yes," I said, " we knew your gift that way
At college; but another which you had—
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?" " You know," said Frank,
" he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books "—
And then to me demanding why: " O sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 't was nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;
God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." " Nay, nay," said Hall,.
" Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." " But I,"
Said Francis, " pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,
And have it; keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame

The Epic

When we were Freshmen. Then at my request
He brought it; and the poet, little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

Morte D'Arthur

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
" The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,

Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride, for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
" It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept

And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

" And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
" What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
" I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
" Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
" Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
" My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, " Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, " Place me in the barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.

Morte D'Arthur

Such times have not been since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole *Round Table* is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
" The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—

To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell;
At which the parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt; it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not; but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud, as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn.
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now—that 's nothing!" drew a little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.
And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with the crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
" Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—" Come again, and thrice as fair;"
And, further inland, voices echoed—" Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

The Gardener's Daughter

Or, The Pictures

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—O, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart

The Gardener's Daughter

Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of Love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will *you* paint like this?" and I replied—
My words were half in earnest, half in jest:
"'T is not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
A more ideal artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March."
And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go and see
The Gardener's daughter; trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Altho' between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low—
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark east,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud,
Drew downward; but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound—
For those old Mays had thrice the life of these—
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me:
" Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,

These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"
And I made answer: "Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
And on he went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the north,
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge.
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momently
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."
He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,

The Gardener's Daughter

That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the garden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground.
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd
Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her:

"Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,

Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
Less exquisite than thine."
She look'd; but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.
I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beam'd thro' the darken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,—the master, Love,
A more ideal artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance

That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchman peal
The sliding season; all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odours on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me: sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the colour to my cheek;
A thought would fill my happy eyes with dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.
The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touched with some new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds; but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the grey cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows. From them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd, with the time we play'd,
We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,

And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, " I am thine."

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, " Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those who, setting wide the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconcilement, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep?

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul,
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes, the time
Is come to raise the veil.
Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

Dora

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, " I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said: " My son,
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die;
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter; he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora. Take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,

For many years." But William answer'd short:
" I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora!" Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
" You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William, take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish,
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: " My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
" It cannot be; my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William; then distresses came on him,
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that 's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you.
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that 's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field

And spied her not, for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: " Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, " This is William's child!"
" And did I not," said Allan, " did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
" Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that 's gone!"
And Allan said: " I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora s feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said: " My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answer'd Mary: " This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself;
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back.
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kiss'd

Each other and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch; they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arms,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her;
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

"O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora; take her back, she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife; but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."

F S COBURN

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:

"I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundred-fold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together, and as years
Went forward Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

Audley Court

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court."
I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,

Audley Court

With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over,—who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall;
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud,
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang:

"O, who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

"O, who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

"Who 'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all; but let me live my life.

"O, who would love? I woo'd a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live my life."

He sang his song, and I replied with mine.
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew:

"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast;
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip.
I go to-night; I come to-morrow morn.

"I go, but I return; I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,
Did what I would. But ere the night we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us; lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbour-buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

Walking to the Mail

JOHN. I 'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hillside was redder than a fox!
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see?
No, not the County Member's with the vane.
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half
A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward Head's.
But he 's abroad; the place is to be sold.

John. O, his! He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vext with a morbid devil in his blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life—
That keeps us all in order more or less—
And sick of home went overseas for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he 's here and there.
But let him go; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What 's that?

James. You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—
There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up
And bristles, half has fall'n and made a bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—
Caught *in flagrante*—what 's the Latin word?—
Delicto; but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat; no servant stay'd.
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, " What!
You 're flitting!" " Yes, we 're flitting," says the ghost—
For they had pack'd the thing among the beds.
" O, well," says he, " you flitting with us too!—
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

John. *He* left *his* wife behind; for so I heard.
James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once;
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.
John. O, yet but I remember, ten years back—
'T is now at least ten years—and then she was—
You could not light upon a sweeter thing;
A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.
James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd
To what she is; a nature never kind!
Like men, like manners; like breeds like, they say.
Kind nature is the best; those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand—
Which are indeed the manners of the great.
John. But I had heard it was this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.
James. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him, when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing; he thought himself
A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry

Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs. But, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world—
Of those that want, and those that have; and still
The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school,—a college in the South.
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs; but there was law for *us;*
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragg'd her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair
With hand and rope we hailed the groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved
As one by one we took them—but for this—
As never sow was higher in this world—
Might have been happy; but what lot is pure?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

John. They found you out?

James. Not they.

John. Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?
His nerves were wrong. What ails us who are sound
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To pity—more from ignorance than will.
But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail; and here it comes
With five at top, as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see,—three pyebalds and a roan.

Edwin Morris

Or, The Lake

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,
My one oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher then.
See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimney'd bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.
O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull
The curate—he was fatter than his cure!

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss, and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,
And his first passion; and he answer'd me,
And well his words became him—was he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke:

"My love for Nature is as old as I;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seem'd to move and change
With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe."

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull:

Edwin Morris

" I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world."

" Parson," said I, " you pitch the pipe too low.
But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his;
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music—yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a dream?"
I ask'd him half-sardonically.
" Give?
Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
" I would have hid her needle in my heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin; my ears could hear
Her lightest breath; her least remark was worth
The experience of the wise. I went and came;
Her voice fled always thro' the summer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!
The flower of each, those moments when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no more."
Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely, that there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness; howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?
But you can talk, yours is a kindly vein;
I have, I think,—Heaven knows,—as much within;
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place. 'T is from no want in her;
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I, knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
"God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world."
And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we left

Edwin Morris

The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows to the lisping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a god, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'T is true, we met; one hour I had, no more:
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close, " Your Letty, only yours "; and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
The sweet-gale rustle round the shelving keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept. She moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers.
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed
In some new planet. A silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed. " Leave," she cried,
" O, leave me!" " Never, dearest, never: here
I brave the worst;" and while we stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came,
Trustees and aunts and uncles. " What, with him!
Go," shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus; " him! "
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen, " Him! "
Again with hands of wild rejection, " Go!—

Girl, get you in!" She went—and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work;
It seems I broke a close with force and arms:
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd;
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below;
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake, but this,—
She seems a part of those fresh days to me;
For in the dust and drouth of London life
She moves among my visions of the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

Saint Simeon Stylites

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn, and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin!

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed

Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O, take the meaning, Lord! I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.
O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh.
I hope my end draws nigh; half dead I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,

Saint Simeon Stylites

Have mercy, mercy! take away my sin!

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way—
And heedfully I sifted all my thought—
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God!

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore; but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain-side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live.
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,

Saint Simeon Stylites

For that the evil ones come here, and say,
" Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven and Earth, and Time are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die.
O, mercy, mercy! wash away my sin!

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin.
'T is their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,

That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers;
And I, in truth—thou wilt bear witness here—
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance; let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
"Saint Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.

Saint Simeon Stylites

It cannot be but that I shall be saved,
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surmane
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest;
They flapp'd my light out as I read; I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book;
With coltlike whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify

Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What 's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come!
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?

Saint Simeon Stylites

Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'T is gone; 't is here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints; I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern; lead them to thy light.

The Talking Oak

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that which in me burn'd,
The love that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself returned,

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

The Talking Oak

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarised a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under heaven
None else could understand,
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'T were well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.

" O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace;

The Talking Oak

" Old summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

" Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift.

" And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces that would thrive
When this man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

" And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork;

" The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays.

" And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

The Talking Oak

" And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

" I swear—and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall!—
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

" For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

" From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

" I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,—
And hear me with thine ears—
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years,

" Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass;

The Talking Oak

" For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace,
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

" O, yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

" And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy;
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

" An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled greys.

" But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you used to come,
She look'd with discontent.

" She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut;
She could not please herself.

" Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

" A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child;

" But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower she touch'd on dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

" And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my " giant bole ";

" And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist.
Alas! I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

" I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

" Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O, muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

" O, yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

The Talking Oak

" A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

" Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain,
But not a creature was in sight;
She kiss'd me once again.

" Her kisses were so close and kind
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd;

" And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the spring
That show the year is turn'd.

" Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

" I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust;

The Talking Oak

" For ah! my friend, the days were brief
  Whereof the poets talk,
When that which breathes within the leaf
  Could slip its bark and walk.

" But could I, as in times foregone,
  From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
  The life that spreads in them,

" She had not found me so remiss;
  But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
  With usury thereto."

O, flourish high, with leafy towers,
  And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
  But leave thou mine to me.

O, flourish, hidden deep in fern,
  Old oak, I love thee well!
A thousand thanks for what I learn
  And what remains to tell.

" 'T is little more: the day was warm;
  At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
  And at my feet she lay.

The Talking Oak

" Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

" I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife,
And lull'd them in my own.

" Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

" A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

" Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

" But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

" And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

" I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O, kiss him once for me!

" O, kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
  Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
  Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
  Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
  From here to Lizard-point.

O, rock upon thy towery-top
  All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
  Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
  And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
  The sound of minster bells!

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
  That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
  High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
  But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders being the mellow rain,
  That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

Love and Duty

OF love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O, shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law,
System, and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night, the summer night, that paused
Among her stars to hear us, stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen; all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O, then, like those who clench their nerves to rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.
Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will?—
Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by
My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
O, might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plough of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

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The Golden Year

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard
wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales.
Old James was with me; we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis. Then we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-way up
The counter side; and that same song of his
He told me, for I banter'd him and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied poet in the feverous days
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, "Give,
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd!

To which "They call me what they will," he said:
"But I was born too late; the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—

Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn:

" We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The sun flies forward to his brother sun;
The dark earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.
" Ah! tho' the times when some new thought can bud
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year;
" When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.
" Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
" Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing heavenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.
" But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon
" Ah, folly! " in mimic cadence answer'd James—
" Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'T is like the second world to us that live;
'T were all as one to fix our hopes on heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."

With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis;
Then added, all in heat:
" What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward; dreamers both—
You most, that, in an age when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge
His hand into the bag; but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

Ulysses

IT little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all,—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end.
To rest unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,

Ulysses

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me,—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tithonus

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this grey shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a god!
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift.
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Tithonus

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground.

Tithonus

Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

Locksley Hall

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn;
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, past in music out of sight.

Locksley Hall

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the
copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of
the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately
ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the
lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no
more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren
shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs
have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish
tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to
decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart
than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength
of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living
truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's
rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead
of the fool!

Well—'t is well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou
less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but
bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the
root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years
should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the
mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew
her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'T is a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier
page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous
Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the
strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of
my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming
years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's
field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer
drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary
dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before
him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs
of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping
something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things
that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left
me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of
joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from
point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping
nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process
of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his
youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a
boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on
the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears
a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of
his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom thy foolish passion were a target for
their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd
string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's plea-
sure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shal-
lower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd
with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for
some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began
to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope
and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky
race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they
shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances
in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows
of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words
are wild,
But I count the grey barbarian lower than the Christian
child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious
gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with
lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun
or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Locksley Hall

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over
heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breath a thunder-
bolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or
snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

Godiva

I WAITED for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this:—

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry; for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,

His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, " If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
" You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?"—" But I would die," said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul,
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear:
" O ay, ay, ay, you talk!"—" Alas!" she said,
" But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, " Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition, but that she would loose
The people; therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,

The grim Earl's gift: but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity.
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see; the barking cur
Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses; the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared; but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,

And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd; and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
One after one; but even then she gain'd
Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away
And built herself an everlasting name.

The Day-Dream

Prologue

O LADY FLORA, let me speak;
A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place
And order'd words asunder fly.

The Sleeping Palace

I

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs;
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily; no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid of honour blooming fair.
The page has caught her hand in his;
Her lips are sever'd as to speak;
His own are pouted to a kiss;
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams that thro' the oriel shine
Make prisms in every carven glass
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
  At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
  And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
  Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
  High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
  And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
  Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
  As all are order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
  And bring the fated fairy Prince.

The Sleeping Beauty

I

Year after year unto her feet,
  She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet
  The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

The Day-Dream

On either side her tranced form
  Forth streaming from a braid of pearl;
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
  And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
  Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
  Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
  With bracelets of the diamond bright.
Her constant beauty doth inform
  Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps; her breathings are not heard
  In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
  That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps; on either hand upswells
  The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest;
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
  A perfect form in perfect rest.

The Arrival

I

All precious things, discover'd late,
  To those that seek them issue forth;

For love in sequel works with fate,
  And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
  His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
  And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
  That strove in other days to pass
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
  Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
  "They perish'd in their daring deeds."
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
  "The many fail, the one succeeds."

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks;
  He breaks the hedge; he enters there;
The colour flies into his cheeks;
  He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
  About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
  And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind;
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!"

The Revival

I

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,

The Day-Dream

The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply,
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

The Departure

I

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,

And far across the hills they went
  In that new world which is the old;
Across the hills, and far away
  Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
  The happy princess follow'd him.

II

"I 'd sleep another hundred years,
  O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake for ever, love," she hears;
  "O love, 't was such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star
  And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
  The twilight melted into morn.

III

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
  "O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
  "O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
  Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
  The twilight died into the dark.

IV

"A hundred summers! can it be?
  And whither goest thou, tell me where?

" O, seek my father's court with me,
  For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
  Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
  Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

Moral

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
  And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
  What moral is in being fair.
O, to what uses shall we put
  The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
  Within the bosom of the rose?

II

But any man that walks the mead,
  In bud or blade or bloom, may find,
According as his humours lead,
  A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
  In art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 't were to cramp its use if I
  Should hook it to some useful end.

L'Envoi

I

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well—were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men,
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes?
For we are ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads, would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care;
You 'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there;
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you,
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind;

Which, all too dearly self-involved,
  Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me,—
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
  That lets thee neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
  And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
  And that for which I care to live.

Epilogue

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
  And if you find a meaning there,
O, whisper to your glass, and say,
  "What wonder if he thinks me fair?"
What wonder I was all unwise,
  To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
  That float thro' heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
  By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
  And either sacred unto you.

Amphion

MY father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren;
Yet say the neighbours when they call
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion!
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber!

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,

Amphion

Wherever he sat down and sung
  He left a small plantation;
Wherever in a lonely grove
  He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
  And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
  And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
  Coquetting with young beeches;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
  Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
  Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
  The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the middle, buzz! she went
  With all her bees behind her;
The poplars, in long order due,
  With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
  By rivers gallopaded.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
  Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
  Poussetting with a sloe-tree;

Amphion

Old elms came breaking from the vine,
  The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
  From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,
  When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
  The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
  Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
  The random sunshine lighten'd?

O, Nature first was fresh to men,
  And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
  You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
  And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
  And scirrhous roots and tendons!

'T is vain! in such a brassy age
  I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
  Scarce answer to my whistle;

Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading;
O Lord!—'t is in my neighbour's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of Transplanting Trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor snappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.

Amphion

Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I 'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom;
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

Saint Agnes' Eve

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon;
My breath to heaven like vapour goes;
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord.
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;

Saint Agnes' Eve

So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

Sir Galahad

MY good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;

Sir Galahad

I never felt the kiss of love,
  Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
  Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
  A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
  A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
  I hear a noise of hymns.
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
  I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
  The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
  The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
  And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
  I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
  I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
  Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
  On sleeping wings they sail.

Sir Galahad

Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
  My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
  And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
  Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
  The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
  And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
  And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
  No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
  Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
  Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
  That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
  Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
  Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
  This mortal armour that I wear,

Sir Galahad

This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
  Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
  And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
  Swells up and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
  Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
  Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
  By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
  Until I find the Holy Grail.

Edward Gray

" Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
' You 're too slight and fickle,' I said,
' To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

" There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, ' Listen to my despair;
I repent me of all I did;
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

" Then I took a pencil and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
' Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

" Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

" Bitterly wept I over the stone;
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away.
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

Made at the Cock

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port;
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;

Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New life-blood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days.
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
The gaslight wavers dimmer;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

I grow in worth and wit and sense,
  Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence
  Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
  For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
  And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
  Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
  Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
  There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
  All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
  If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
  Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
  We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
  We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,
  With fair horizons bound;

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

This whole wide earth of light and shade
  Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
  And set in heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
  But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
  Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint you brought me was the best
  That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
  My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
  Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
  No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
  This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
  Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
  Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
  With many kinsmen gay,

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

Where long and largely we carouse
  As who shall say me nay?
Each month, a birthday coming on,
  We drink, defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
  And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage yet unkept,
  Had relish fiery-new,
Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
  As old as Waterloo,
Or, stow'd when classic Canning died,
  In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
  The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
  She answer'd to my call;
She changes with that mood or this,
  Is all-in-all to all;
She lit the spark within my throat,
  To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
  Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
  The waiter's hands, that reach

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

To each his perfect pint of stout,
  His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
  That with the napkin dally;
I think he came, like Ganymede,
  From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
  Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
  And cramm'd a plumper crop,
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
  Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
  And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
  Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
  That knuckled at the taw.
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
  Flew over roof and casement;
His brothers of the weather stood
  Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and spire,
  And follow'd with acclaims,

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

A sign to many a staring shire,
  Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
  Till, where the streets grow straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
  And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?
  How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
  Among the chops and steaks!
'T is but a steward of the can,
  One shade more plump than common;
As just and mere a serving-man
  As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
  Into the common day?
Is it the weight of that half-crown
  Which I shall have to pay?
For, something duller than at first,
  Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
  And thrumming on the table;

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
  I take myself to task,

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask;
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet,
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is grey before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup;
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone;
'T is gone, and let it go.
'T is gone: a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fallen into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more;

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits,—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow,
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days that deal in ana swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass;
With time I will not quarrel;
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

I too must part; I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And whereso'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots;
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots;
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;

Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue

Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
  The corners of thine eyes;
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
  Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
  Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
  To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
  Of life, shalt earn no more,
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
  Shall show thee past to heaven;
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
  A pint-pot neatly graven.

Lady Clare

IT was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;
Lovers long-betroth'd were they;
They two will wed the morrow morn—
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare;
"To-morrow he weds with me."

Lady Clare

" O God be thank'd," said Alice the nurse,
" That all comes round so just and fair!
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

" Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,"
Said Lady Clare, " that ye speak so wild?"
" As God 's above," said Alice the nurse,
" I speak the truth: you are my child.

" The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

" Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, " if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
" But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

" If I 'm a beggar born," she said,
" I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

Lady Clare

" Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
" But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, " Not so; but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

" Nay now, what faith? " said Alice the nurse;
" The man will cleave unto his right."
" And he shall have it," the lady replied,
" Tho' I should die to-night."

" Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee!"
" O mother, mother, mother," she said,
" So strange it seems to me.

" Yet here 's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare;
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Lady Clare

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
" O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

" If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are;
I am a beggar born," she said,
" And not the Lady Clare."

" Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
" Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail;
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn;
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood;
" If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, " the next in blood,—

" If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, " the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

The Captain

A Legend of the Navy

HE that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was; the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression;
Stern he was and rash,
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.

Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
  Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
  Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and islands,
  Many a harbour-mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
  Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
  O 'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
  Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's colour heightened,
  Joyful came his speech;
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
  In the eyes of each.
" Chase," he said; the ship flew forward,
  And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she norward,
  Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
  Had what they desired;
Mute with folded arms they waited—
  Not a gun was fired.
But they heard the foeman's thunder
  Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder,
  Crashing went the boom,

The Captain

Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,
  Bullets fell like rain;
Over mast and deck were scatter'd
  Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken;
  Every mother's son—
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—
  Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
  Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
  Did they smile on him.
Those in whom he had reliance
  For his noble name
With one smile of still defiance
  Sold him unto shame.
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
  Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
  Falling on the dead.
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
  Years have wander'd by;
Side by side beneath the water
  Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
  O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely seabird crosses
  With one waft of the wing.

The Lord of Burleigh

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
"If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well."
She replies, in accents fainter,
"There is none I love like thee."
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips that fondly falter
Presses his without reproof,
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
"I can make no marriage present;
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life."
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand;

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The Lord of Burleigh

Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer;
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns,
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before.

The Lord of Burleigh

Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door;
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
"All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free;
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin;
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove;
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirit sank,
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank;
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such

The Lord of Burleigh

That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, "O that he
Were once more that landscape-painter
Which did win my heart from me!"
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side;
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
"Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

The Voyage

I

WE left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the south.
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail;
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the sun!

III

How oft we saw the sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield.

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen;
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, "O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
  Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
  Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
  Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
  She bore the blade of Liberty.

X

And only one among us—him
  We pleased not—he was seldom pleased;
He saw not far, his eyes were dim,
  But ours he swore were all diseased.
"A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,
  "A ship of fools," he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
  He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
  Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We loved the glories of the world,
  But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
  But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
  And to and thro' the counter gale?

The Voyage

XII

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led;
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before;
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

A Fragment

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.
In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song;
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong;
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong;
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began

To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring;
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set;
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid.
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,

Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A Farewell

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver;
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river;
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

The Beggar Maid

HER arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say;
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen;
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been.
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

The Eagle

Fragment

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

"Move Eastward, Happy Earth"

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow;
From fringes of the faded eve,
O happy planet, eastward go,
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

"Come Not, when I am Dead"

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie;
Go by, go by.

The Letters

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air;
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow;
"Cold altar, heaven and earth shall meet
Before you hear my marriage vow."

II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colours I approved.

The Letters

III

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips comprest,
And gave my letters back to me;
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please.
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV

She told me all her friends had said;
I raged against the public liar;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
"No more of love, your sex is known;
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of hell,—
And women's slander is the worst,—
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
Thro' you my life will be accurst."
I spoke with heart and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms—
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

The Letters

VI

We parted; sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapour-braided blue;
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
" Dark porch," I said, " and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells."

The Vision of Sin

I

I HAD a vision when the night was late;
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise.
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;

Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles. They that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.
Then the music touch'd the gates and died,
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round.
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew;

Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn.
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded; and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded; and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late,
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace-gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A grey and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

The Vision of Sin

" Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed.
What! the flower of life is past;
It is long before you wed.

" Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

" I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

" Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

" Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

" Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

The Vision of Sin

" Thou shalt not be saved by works,
  Thou hast been a sinner too;
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
  Empty scarecrows, I and you!

" Fill the cup and fill the can,
  Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
  Every moment one is born.

" We are men of ruin'd blood;
  Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
  Rising to no fancy-flies.

" Name and fame! to fly sublime
  Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
  Bandied by the hands of fools.

" Friendship!—to be two in one—
  Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
  How she mouths behind my back.

" Virtue!—to be good and just—
  Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
  Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

The Vision of Sin

" O! we two as well can look
  Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
  Leering at his neighbour's wife.

" Fill the cup and fill the can,
  Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
  Every moment one is born.

" Drink, and let the parties rave;
  They are fill'd with idle spleen,
Rising, falling, like a wave,
  For they know not what they mean.

" He that roars for liberty
  Faster binds a tyrant's power,
And the tyrant's cruel glee
  Forces on the freer hour.

" Fill the can and fill the cup;
  All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
  And is lightly laid again.

" Greet her with applausive breath,
  Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
  In her left a human head.

The Vision of Sin

"No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house,
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool,—
Visions of a perfect State;
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

The Vision of Sin

" Tell me tales of thy first love—
  April hopes, the fools of chance—
Till the graves begin to move,
  And the dead begin to dance.

" Fill the can and fill the cup;
  All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
  And is lightly laid again.

" Trooping from their mouldy dens
  The chap-fallen circle spreads—
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
  Hollow hearts and empty heads!

" You are bones, and what of that?
  Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
  Is but modell'd on a skull.

" Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
  Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex
  From the fashion of your bones.

" No, I cannot praise the fire
  In your eye—nor yet your lip;
All the more do I admire
  Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness—the ground plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed;
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near—
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup and fill the can;
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man;
Yet we will not die forlorn."

V

The voice grew faint; there came a further change;
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range.
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms;

The Vision of Sin

By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake: "Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said: "The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one: "He had not wholly quench'd his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour."
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope?"
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

To —

After Reading a Life and Letters

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

YOU might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown;
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

To ——

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

" Proclaim the faults he would not show;
Break lock and seal, betray the trust;
Keep nothing sacred, 't is but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

To E. L., on his Travels in Greece

ILLRYIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

To E. L., on his Travels in Greece

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
  Of cavern pillars; on the swell
  The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea
  By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
  To him who sat upon the rocks
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

The Poet's Song

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street;
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat;
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey;
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

Enoch Arden

and Other Poems

Introduction

By Stopford A. Brooke and Elisabeth Luther Cary

I

IT is plain that *Enoch Arden* is written in quite a different manner from *Dora*. It is concise, of course; Tennyson was always concise; but *Enoch Arden* is not overconcise. The action of the piece, and the movement of the feelings of the persons in it, are delayed. There is repetition, there is enough talking over events to make us understand that years and years pass by. The atmosphere of a remote seaside hamlet, and of its life from day to day, is fully preserved and felt. We do not think, as we do when we read *Dora*, of the style at all. It has come; it is exactly right; it has grown naturally out of the artist's profound feeling of his subject. Moreover, the verse is plain in sound, and takes pains to be like the talk of daily common life. It never rises into the heroic march save twice, once in the

description of the tropic isle by day and night; and again, when Enoch looks in at the window and sees his home in which he has no share. Even the similes (in which a poet is allowed to soar a little) are restrained into simplicity. The things used in illustration belong to the same level of life to which the rest of the poem belongs. I quote two of them to show what I mean. Annie, wrapt in sorrow for Enoch's going, does not know of what he speaks:

> Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
> Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
> Musing on him who used to fill it for her,
> Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

That is one—a rustic picture and a rustic heart fixed in four lines; and this is another—born out of a sailor's life, and fitted in grave simplicity to the mighty relief of death:

> For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
> See thro' the grey skirts of a lifting squall
> The boat that bears the hope of life approach
> To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
> Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

Such is the atmosphere.

There is not much of natural description in the poem. But Tennyson sets the scenery of the action in the first nine lines—

> Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm; etc.

They cannot be called a description of Nature. They

make, as it were, the scenic background before which a drama is to be played, and this is all the poet intends them to represent. Two other scenes are laid, one where the wood feathers down to the hollow filled with hazels, where both Enoch and Philip tell their love to Annie; and the other, the room in the cottage where we see Philip and Enoch's wife, and the garden without in the dark, whence Enoch looks through the window with a breaking heart. One other scene is set in the tropic isle where Enoch sits among the palms, gazing on the separating sea. This is the one distinct description of Nature in the poem, and, though it is good, it is not as good as another poet who sympathised more with that type of Nature would have made it. Tennyson, I have said, was out of his element when he was away from England. And this description, with which he seems to have taken great pains, is not fused together by any feeling for the Nature described; there is no colour in it but scarlet, and the one line in it which is first-rate, might have been written in Cornwall from sight:

> The league-long roller thundering on the reef.

From Brooke's "Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life."

Introduction

II

IN Tennyson's good year of 1864 he followed the stately pageant of Arthur's court with the story of a fisherman. *Enoch Arden*, in comparison with *Maud* or *In Memoriam*, was certainly simple. The poet had stripped his style of its jewels and ornaments, and had striven, we learn from the Memoir, to use only similes "such as might have been used by simple fisher-folk." He had abjured all perplexing speculation as well, and had refrained from indulging in scientific suggestions; he had even let the superstition of the uneducated slip into his lines, and had not made his heroine more beautiful than the usual belle of a little fishing village. All this had he done when Mr. Walter Bagehot arose and selected *Enoch Arden* to illustrate his theory of the ornate in poetry! The story is simple enough, he says: "A sailor, who sells fish, breaks his leg, gets dismal, gives up selling fish, goes to sea, is wrecked on a desert island, stays there some years, on his return finds his wife married to a miller, speaks to a landlady on the subject, and dies. Told in the pure and simple, the unadorned and classic style, this story would not have taken three pages, but Mr. Tennyson has been able to make it the principal, the largest, tale in his new volume. He has done so only by giving to every event and incident in the volume an accompanying commentary."

When other critics were busy pointing out either that the poem was immoral because Annie married Philip before Enoch was really dead, or that it was exceptionally pure in its delineation of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, or that it was intensely natural and plain and "Saxon" in its treatment, or that it showed a perfect understanding of the feelings of sailors and the wives of sailors, Mr. Bagehot was saying that Mr. Tennyson had given us "a sailor crowded all over with ornament and illustration, because he then wanted to describe an unreal type of fancied men,—not sailors as they are, but sailors as they might be wished." Fish, he said, might be "Ocean-spoil in ocean-smelling osier," but fishermen are apt to be rather coarse and not charming at all. So it was necessary to ornament Enoch and make him the sort of a man a cultivated person would choose to be if he were obliged to transmigrate into a fisherman.

The beauties of nature, said Mr. Bagehot, would not have occupied the real Enoch so much as they occupied Mr. Tennyson in thinking about tropical scenery. "He would have known little of the scarlet shafts of sunrise and nothing of the long convolvuluses. As in Robinson Crusoe, his own petty contrivances and his small ailments would have been the principal subject to him. 'For three years,' he might have said, 'my back was bad; and then I put

two pegs into a piece of driftwood and so made a chair; and after that it pleased God to send me a chill.' In real life his piety would scarcely have gone beyond that." But Tennyson was quite justified, according to Mr. Bagehot's theory, in ornamenting Enoch and his surroundings. "The essence of pure art," he says, "consists in describing what is as it is, and this is very well for what can bear it, but there are many inferior things which will not bear it, and which nevertheless ought to be described in books. And a fisherman selling his wares in a small village is an inferior thing.

The most interesting poem in the little volume to which *Enoch Arden* gave a name is *The Northern Farmer, Old Style*. Here, at all events, we get simplicity primeval. In fact, Tennyson, in striking this rustic note, seemed to awaken a new set of faculties within himself. Where he had been elaborately refined he became ruggedly plain-spoken; where he had been mildly humorous, to concede the most, he became irresistibly so; where he had picked and chosen the sweetest fruits of language, he pulled up the tubers of the Lincolnshire dialect and let them go into his lines smelling freshly of the soil. It was perhaps a whim with him, certainly not the settled tendency of his mind; but the result was a little masterpiece. In order to realise just what the poem means, especially in America where Hosea Biglow

has set the rustic type for us, it is necessary to get some idea of the class to which Tennyson's farmer belongs. The *Westminster Review*, in 1891, gave a brief account of it, from which the following extract is taken:

"These farmers were almost the last of their race. Their portraits at first sight appear to be lugubrious caricatures. Their ignorance appears so colossal as to be incredible. It must be borne in mind, however, that in their virtues, in their failings, in their mode of life and manners, and even in their speech, they differed very little from the time when their forefathers, with native grace, submitted to the yoke of the conquering Normans. Through changes—dynastic, religious or social—they remained unchanged. The nearest market-town formed the utmost limits to their travels.

"The farm labourer was equally conservative. His ideas were almost as luminous as those of his typical ancestor, "Gurth, the son of Beowulf, the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood." Not that he acknowledged himself the "thrall" of anybody. It was an article of his creed that "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves." His most treasured posession, after that of his knowledge of men and things, was that of his independence. He never dreamed of leaving his native village, and his ideas were as circumscribed as his locality. Though by nature gifted

with splendid stubbornness, he yielded unquestioning obedience to the farmer. When work permitted he attended church on Sunday, and snored through the service in his humble free seat with as much devotion as the farmer in his high-backed pew. His humour was of the ruminating and ponderous kind, and manifested itself on occasion in a solemn horse-play. When opportunity occurred he proved himself a mighty man at the tankard or trencher; these were moments of supreme bliss. In an animal way he was happy. He had no ambition and therefore no discontent. Though he sometimes grumbled, and pretty loudly too, he nevertheless believed his condition to be unalterable. The agitator had not discovered him. Joseph Arch was as yet unborn, and Tom Mann had not preached the new crusade of labour.

"Yet these farmers and labourers whom Tennyson chatted with in Somersby fifty years ago were the witnesses of the beginning of a revolution in the state of English agriculture whose consequences no man then was able to foresee, which many, even now, fail to appreciate. The system of large farms was coming into vogue. They were destined to absorb all the small holdings, and to drive the sturdy yeomanry, who for generations had managed them with credit and success, into the new rising manufacturing centres to eke out a miserable existence.

Introduction

The craze for large farms infected the old Lincolnshire farmer:

> 'Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs up to the mill
> An' I'll run up to the brig.'

The ruling passion was the acquisition of "proputty" by the consolidation of neighbouring small holdings into his large farm. The new system introduced new dangers. One man in every three was, as it developed, thrown out of employment. Thus rendered arbitrarily idle, the unemployed left their village, and flocked to the large towns. Hence the overcrowding and overcompetition, with their resultant complications of social and moral evil.

"Before he left home, Tennyson saw the beginning of these changes. He is one of the few living Lincolnshire men who saw the now obsolete operations of sowing broadcast and dibbling beans. He would remember thrashing with the flail—which gave occupation to many men through the winter—being superseded by the horse-machine, and the resentment which the innovation aroused. The Lincolnshire farm labourers awoke as from sleep. Their hatred rose to frenzy. They resorted to violence. Machines were destroyed. The lives of their owners were threatened. For a while terror and confusion reigned. The red fires of incendiarism lit the midnight sky. Farmers became afraid. The machines

were guarded by night and by day. The blind power of ignorance made itself felt. At first the law seemed powerless. The lame and toothless parish constables were either unable or unwilling to arrest the ringleaders. Ultimately, two farm labourers, aged respectively twenty-two and twenty-four, were captured, not far from Tennyson's home, tried at the Lincoln summer assizes in 1831, and sentenced to death. Both were executed.

"The agitation subsided. It broke out again in 1848, with the introduction of the steam thrashing machine. Even the 'Farmer, old style,' who had stood firmly for the first machine, resented this innovation:

'A kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.'

"The opposition, however, soon died down. 'The old order' had changed. The tide of rural migration was now flowing merrily into the towns. Small holdings were fast becoming a rarity, and large farms, with a minimum of labour, the rule.

"As we have already observed, the race of men from whom Tennyson drew the type of the old-style farmer is extinct. 'Nature brings not back the mastodon.' This type can never again recur."

From Cary's "Tennyson: His Homes, His Friends, and His Work."

Enoch Arden

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a grey down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand

To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff;
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too," said Philip, "turn and turn about;"
When, if they quarrelled, Enoch stronger-made
Was master. Then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,

To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie; and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas,
And all men look'd upon him favourably.
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, half-way up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd—
His father lying sick and needing him—
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large grey eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then as their faces drew together, groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honourable toil,
With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.

Enoch Arden

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven. Thither used
Enoch at times to go by land and sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell.
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one.
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs; and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her he loved a beggar. Then he pray'd,
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd

No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing. Yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans:
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea, twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all;
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will;
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day, by night, renew'd—
Sure that all evil would come out of it—
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring, but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,

Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes,
Whatever came to him; and then he said:
" Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I 'll be back, my girl, before you know it;"
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, " and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonising
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: " O Enoch, you are wise;

And yet for all your widsom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more."

" Well, then," said Enoch, " I shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here "—
He named the day;—" get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came:
" Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear,
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these,
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His; He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said,
" Wake him not, let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from the baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it; this he kept

Thro' all his future, but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She, when the day that Enoch mention'd came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain. Perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not, and while he stood on deck,
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less.
And still foreboding "What would Enoch say?"
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold.
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care; nevertheless,

Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace,—
Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her,—
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
"Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,
May be some little comfort;" therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly,
"Annie, I came to ask a favour of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply,
"Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

" I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband. I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man;
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing up
Than his had been, or yours; that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school;
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd: " I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;

And now I think your kindness breaks me down.
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me;
He will repay you. Money can be repaid,
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd,
" Then will you let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from the wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind;
Scarce could the woman, when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they,
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where; and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; when they begg'd
For Father Philip, as they call'd him, too.
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him,
" Come with us, Father Philip," he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest," she said.
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow. At last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.
"Tired?" but her face had fallen upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said,
"I thought not of it; but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:

" Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long
That, tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well, then—let me speak.
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help;
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children; I do think
They love me as a father; I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon it;
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours,
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie—tenderly she spoke:
" You have been as God's good angel in our house.
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved

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As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"
"I am content," he answer'd, "to be loved
A little after Enoch." "O," she cried,
Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait a while.
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long.
Surely I shall be wiser in a year.
O wait a little!" Philip sadly said,
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." "Nay," she cried,
"I am bound: you have my promise—in a year.
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"
And Philip answer'd, "I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
Then, fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
Saying gently, "Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
I am always bound to you, but you are free."
Then Annie weeping answer'd, "I am bound."

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she ask'd.
"Yes, if the nuts," he said, "be ripe again;
Come out and see." But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take your own time."
And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds;
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign, "My Enoch, is he gone?"
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under the palm-tree." That was nothing to her,
No meaning there; she closed the Book and slept.
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the sun.
"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried
'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him,
"There is no reason why we should not wed."

" Then for God's sake," he answer'd, " both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells, and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then that, ere she enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter? Philip thought he knew:
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
Being with child; but when her child was born,
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? Prosperously sail'd
The ship *Good Fortune*, tho' at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually

And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon also for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of " breakers " came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning "Wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,—
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,

A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail.
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things, and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yew-tree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up

Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That which being everywhere
Lets none who speaks with Him seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship—
She wanted water—blown by baffling winds,
Like the *Good Fortune*, from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay;
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamour. Downward from his mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what; and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran,
And ever as he mingled with the crew,

And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd, they took aboard.
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it;
And clothes they gave him and free passage home,
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall.
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it;
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?—
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,

Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in grey,
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down.
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there—
A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle—crept
Still downward thinking, "Dead or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it, and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;

A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house:
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child; and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion. Any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller; only when she closed,
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost,"
He, shaking his grey head pathetically,
Repeated muttering, "Cast away and lost;"
Again in deeper inward whispers, "Lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again:
"If I might look on her sweet face again,
And know that she is happy." So the thought
Haunted and harrass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;

There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd,
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yew-tree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it.
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth;
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring

To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd:

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never! no father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,

Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"
He said to Miriam, "that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;" and he thought,
"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait his time;" and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks
That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself.
Yet since he did but labour for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the grey skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking, "After I am gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said:
"Woman, I have a sccret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the Book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamour'd the good woman, "hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."
"Swear," added Enoch sternly, "on the Book;"
And on the Book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his grey eyes upon her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
"His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three more days to live;
I am the man." At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry:
"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be." Enoch said again:
"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;

Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she forebore,
Saying only, " See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

" Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world to be.
This hair is his, she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss. Wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her;
It will moreover be a token to her
That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea
That all the houses in the haven rang.

He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad,
Crying with a loud voice, "A sail! a sail!
I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

Aylmer's Field

1793

DUST are our frames; and, gilded dust, our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and sound,
Like that long-buried body of the king,
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,
Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw
Sunning himself in a waste field alone—
Old, and a mine of memories—who had served,
Long since, a bygone rector of the place,
And been himself a part of what he told.

Sir Aylmer Aylmer, that almighty man,
The county God—in whose capacious hall,
Hung with a hundred shields, the family tree
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate king—
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the spire,
Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-gates,

And swang besides on many a windy sign—
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
Saw from his windows nothing save his own—
What lovelier of his own had he than her,
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
As heiress and not heir regretfully?
But "He that marries her marries her name."
This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
Insipid as the Queen upon a card;
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
Little about it stirring save a brook!
A sleepy land, where under the same wheel
The same old rut would deepen year by year;
Where almost all the village had one name;
Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall
And Averill Averill at the Rectory
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
Were open to each other; tho' to dream
That Love could bind them closer well had made
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up
With horror, worse than had he heard his priest
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men,
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
Somewhere beneath his own low range of roofs,
Have also set his many-shielded tree?
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once,
When the red rose was redder than itself,
And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death.
"Not proven," Averill said, or laughingly,
" Some other race of Averills"—prov'n or no,
What cared he? what, if other or the same?
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
But Leolin, his brother, living oft
With Averill, and a year or two before
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
By one low voice to one dear neighbourhood,
Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
A distant kinship to the gracious blood
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was; a but less vivid hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes, that still
Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd,
Beneath a mane-like mass of rolling gold,
Their best and brightest when they dwelt on hers,
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
But subject to the season or the mood,
Shone like a mystic star between the less

And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore; bounteously made,
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from the first.
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after, hers,
So much the boy foreran; but when his date
Doubled her own, for want of playmates, he—
Since Averill was a decad and a half
His elder, and their parents underground—
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and roll'd
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, arranged
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it green
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
The petty mare's-tail forest, fairy pines,
Or from the tiny pitted target blew
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
All at one mark, all hitting, make-believes
For Edith and himself; or else he forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love
Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,

But where a passion yet unborn perhaps
Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.
And thus together, save for college-times
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,
Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded, grew.
And more and more, the maiden woman-grown,
He wasted hours with Averill; there, when first
The tented winter-field was broken up
Into that phalanx of the summer spears
That soon should wear the garland; there again
When burr and bine were gather'd; lastly there
At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide of youth
Broke with a phosphorescence charming even
My lady, and the Baronet yet had laid
No bar between them. Dull and self-involved,
Tall and erect, but bending from his height
With half-allowing smiles for all the world,
And mighty courteous in the main—his pride
Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
Would care no more for Leolin's walking with her
Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they ran
To loose him at the stables, for he rose
Two-footed at the limit of his chain,
Roaring to make a third; and how should Love,

Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-met eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, master of all.

So these young hearts, not knowing that they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill; his, a brother's love, that hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,
Might have been other, save for Leolin's—
Who knows? but so they wandered, hour by hour
Gather'd the blossom that re-bloom'd, and drank
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
Far out beyond her lodges, where the brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
By sallowy rims, arose the labourers' homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls
That dimpling died into each other, huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel, all had wrought
About them. Here was one that, summer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-joy
In autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden hearth

Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle.
One look'd all rose-tree, and another wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars.
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor.
For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves
To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
A childly way with children, and a laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,
Were no false passport to that easy realm,

Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper, " Bless,
God bless 'em! marriages are made in heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced
With half a score of swarthy faces came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful. So when first he dash'd
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron, " Good! my lady's kinsman! good!"
My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen; unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage
That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah! so long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days.
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life;
Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye,

Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was he.
I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
His oriental gifts on every one
And most on Edith. Like a storm he came,
And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her—possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
When others had been tested—there was one,
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,
Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at whom he shot.
Down from the beetling crag to which he clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
This dagger with him, which, when now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly;
And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard, saying,
"Look what a lovely piece of workmanship!"

Slight was his answer, " Well—I care not for it."
Then playing with the blade he prick'd his hand,
" A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"
"But would it be more gracious," ask'd the girl,
" Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?" " Gracious? No," said he.
" Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon me,
I seem to be ungraciousness itself."
" Take it," she added sweetly, " tho' his gift;
For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,
I care not for it either;" and he said,
" Why, then I love it;" but Sir Aylmer past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard.

The next day came a neighbour. Blues and reds
They talk'd of; blues were sure of it, he thought;
Then of the latest fox—where started—kill'd
In such a bottom. " Peter had the brush,
My Peter, first;" and did Sir Aylmer know
That great pock-pitten fellow had been caught?
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,
And rolling as it were the substance of it
Between his palms a moment up and down—
" The birds were warm, the birds were warm upon him;
We have him now;" and had Sir Aylmer heard—
Nay, but he must—the land was ringing of it—
This blacksmith border-marriage—one they knew—
Raw from the nursery—who could trust a child?

That cursed France with her egalities!
And did Sir Aylmer—deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd accent—think—
For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk
So freely with his daughter? people talk'd—
The boy might get a notion into him;
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke:
"The girl and boy, sir, know their differences!"
"Good," said his friend, "but watch!" and he,
"Enough,
More than enough, sir! I can guard my own."
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night;
Pale as the Jeptha's daughter, a rough piece
Of early rigid colour, under which
Withdrawing by the counter door to that
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
And pelted with outrageous epithets,
Turning beheld the Powers of the House
On either side the hearth, indignant; her,
Cooling her false cheek with a feather fan,
Him, glaring, by his own stale devil spurr'd,

And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing hard.
" Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,
Presumptuous! trusted as he was with her,
The sole succeeder to their wealth, their lands,
The last remaining pillar of their house,
The one transmitter of their ancient name,
Their child." "Our child!" "Our heiress!" "Ours!"
for still,
Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said:
" Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are to make.
I swear you shall not make them out of mine.
Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,
Perplext her, made her half forget herself,
Swerve from her duty to herself and us—
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,
Far as we track ourselves—I say that this—
Else I withdraw favour and countenance
From you and yours for ever—shall you do,
Sir, when you see her—but you shall not see her—
No, you shall write, and not to her, but me;
And you shall say that having spoken with me,
And after look'd into yourself, you find
That you meant nothing—as indeed you know
That you meant nothing. Such a match as this!
Impossible, prodigious!" These were words,
As meted by his measure of himself,
Arguing boundless forbearance: after which,

And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, " I
So foul a traitor to myself and her!
Never, O never!" for about as long
As the wind-hover hangs in balance, paused
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm within,
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and crying,
" Boy, should I find you by my doors again,
My men shall lash you from them like a dog;
Hence!" with a sudden execration drove
The footstool from before him, and arose;
So, stammering " Scoundrel" out of teeth that ground
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but now,
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,
Vext with unworthy madness, and deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye
That watch'd him, till he heard the ponderous door
Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the land,
Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood
And masters of his motion, furiously
Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's ran,
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's ear;
Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed:
The man was his, had been his father's friend;

He must have seen, himself had seen it long;
He must have known, himself had known; besides,
He never yet had set his daughter forth
Here in the woman-markets of the west,
Where our Caucasians let themselves be sold.
Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin to him.
" Brother, for I have loved you more as son
Than brother, let me tell you: I myself—
What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?
Jilted I was; I say it for your peace.
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame
The woman should have borne, humiliated,
I lived for years a stunted sunless life;
Till after our good parents past away
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.
Leolin, I almost sin in envying you.
The very whitest lamb in all my fold
Loves you; I know her; the worst thought she has
Is whiter even than her pretty hand.
She must prove true; for, brother, where two fight
The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,
And you are happy; let her parents be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon them—
Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,
Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs
For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,
Why, twenty boys and girls should marry on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and himself
Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed
This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made
The harlot of the cities; Nature crost
Was mother of the foul adulteries
That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,
Their ancient name! they *might* be proud; its worth
Was being Edith's. Ah, how pale she had look'd,
Darling, to-night! they must have rated her
Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,
These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,
Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing
Since Egbert—why, the greater their disgrace!
Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,
With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!
He had known a man, a quintessence of man,
The life of all—who madly loved—and he,
Thwarted by one of those old father-fools,
Had rioted his life out, and made an end.
He would not do it! her sweet face and faith
Held him from that; but he had powers, he knew it.
Back would he to his studies, make a name,
Name, fortune too; the world should ring of him,
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves.
Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be—
" O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief—
Give me my fling, and let me say my say."

At which, like one that sees his own excess,
And easily forgives it as his own,
He laugh'd, and then was mute, but presently
Wept like a storm; and honest Averill, seeing
How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd
His richest bee's-wing from a bin reserved
For banquets, praised the waning red, and told
The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of age—
Then drank and past it; till at length the two,
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed
That much allowance must be made for men.
After an angry dream this kindlier glow
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,
A perilous meeting under the tall pines
That darken'd all the northward of her Hall.
Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest
In agony, she promised that no force,
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her;
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
Labour for his own Edith, and return
In such a sunlight of prosperity
He should not be rejected. "Write to me!
They loved me, and because I love their child
They hate me. There is war between us, dear,
Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must remain
Sacred to one another." So they talk'd,

Poor children, for their comfort. The wind blew,
The rain of heaven and their own bitter tears,
Tears and the careless rain of heaven, mixt
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other
In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task ourselves
To learn a language known but smatteringly
In phrases here and there at random, toil'd
Mastering the lawless science of our law,
That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances,
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,
May beat a pathway out to wealth and fame.
The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's room,
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurrilous tale, —
Old scandals buried now seven decads deep
In other scandals that have lived and died,
And left the living scandal that shall die—
Were dead to him already; bent as he was
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in hopes,
And prodigal of all brain-labour he,
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran
Beside the river-bank. And then indeed
Harder the times were, and the hands of power
Were bloodier, and the according hearts of men

Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-breeze,
Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
His former talks with Edith, on him breathed
Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,
After his books, to flush his blood with air.
Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,
Drove in upon the student once or twice,
Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,
Had golden hopes for France and all mankind,
Answer'd all queries touching those at home
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,
And fain had haled him out into the world,
And air'd him there. His nearer friend would say,
"Screw not the chord too sharply lest it snap."
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth
From where his worldless heart had kept it warm,
Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise;
For heart, I think, help'd head. Her letters too,
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
Like broken music, written as she found
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he saw
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,
Her worldy-wise begetters, plagued themselves
To sell her, those good parents, for her good.
Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth
Might lie within their compass, him they lured
Into their net made pleasant by the baits
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
So month by month the noise about their doors,
And distant blaze of those dull banquets, made
The nightly wirer of their innocent hare
Falter before he took it. All in vain.
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
So often, that the folly taking wings
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind
With rumour, and became in other fields
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
And laughter to their lords. But those at home,
As hunters round a hunted creature draw
The cordon close and closer toward the death,
Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;
Forbade her first the house of Averill,
Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,
Last from her own home-circle of the poor
They barr'd her. Yet she bore it, yet her cheek
Kept colour—wondrous! but, O mystery!
What amulet drew her down to that old oak,
So old, that twenty years before, a part

Falling had let appear the brand of John—
Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree, but now
The broken base of a black tower, a cave
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing spray.
There the manorial lord too curiously
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust
Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read
Writhing a letter from his child, for which
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,
But scared with threats of jail and halter gave
To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits
The letter which he brought, and swore besides
To play their go-between as heretofore
Nor let them know themselves betray'd; and then,
Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went
Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot dream
The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn
Aroused the black republic on his elms,
Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue brush'd
Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-trove,
Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—who made
A downward crescent of her minion mouth,
Listless in all despondence,—read; and tore,
As if the living passion symboll'd there

Were living nerves to feel the rent; and burnt,
Now chafing at his own great self defied,
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of scorn
In babyisms and dear diminutives
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
Of such a love as like a chidden child,
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last
Hopeless of answer. Then tho' Averill wrote
And bade him with good heart sustain himself—
All would be well—the lover heeded not,
But passionately restless came and went,
And rustling once at night about the place,
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,
Raging return'd. Nor was it well for her
Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,
Watch'd even there; and one was set to watch
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd them all,
Yet bitterer from his readings. Once indeed,
Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in her,
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly,
Not knowing what possess'd him. That one kiss
Was Leolin's strong rival upon earth;
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
Seem'd hope's returning rose; and then ensued
A Martin's summer of his faded love,
Or ordeal by kindness. After this
He seldom crost his child without a sneer;
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies,

Never one kindly smile, one kindly word;
So that the gentle creature shut from all
Her charitable use, and face to face
With twenty months of silence, slowly lost,
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.
Last some low fever ranging round to spy
The weakness of a people or a house,
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or men,
Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—
Save Christ as we believe him—found the girl
And flung her down upon a couch of fire,
Where careless of the household faccs near,
And crying upon the name of Leolin,
She, and with her the race of Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light; may soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or why
That night, that moment, when she named his name,
Did the keen shriek, "Yes, love, yes, Edith, yes,"
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke,
And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,
With a weird bright eye, sweating and trembling,
His hair as it were crackling into flames,
His body half flung forward in pursuit,
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a flyer.
Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry;
And being much befool'd and idioted

By the rough amity of the other, sank
As into sleep again. The second day,
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
A breaker of the bitter news from home,
Found a dead man, a letter edged with death
Beside him, and the dagger which himself
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's blood;
" From Edith " was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.
And when he came again, his flock believed—
Beholding how the years which are not Time's
Had blasted him—that many thousand days
Were clipt by horror from his term of life.
Yet the sad mother, for the second death
Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,
And being used to find her pastor texts,
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
To speak before the people of her child,
And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose.
Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods
Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens
Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof
Sent out a listener. Many too had known
Edith among the hamlets round, and since
The parent's harshness and the hapless loves
And double death were widely murmur'd, left

Their own grey tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,
To hear him; all in mourning these, and those
With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove,
Or kerchief; while the church,—one night, except
For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,—made
Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd
Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,
His face magnetic to the hand from which
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd thro'
His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse, "Behold,
Your house is left unto you desolate!"
But lapsed into so long a pause again
As half amazed, half frighted, all his flock;
Then from his height and loneliness of grief
Bore down in a flood, and dash'd his angry heart
Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,
And all but those who knew the living God—
Eight that were left to make a purer world—
When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought
Such waste and havoc as the idolatries
Which from the low light of morality
Shot up their shadows to the heaven of heavens,
And worshipt their own darkness in the Highest?

" Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy brute Baäl,
And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy God.
Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.
The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own lusts!—
No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing lawns,
And heaps of living gold that daily grow,
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.
In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him;* for thine
Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot die;
And tho' thou numberest with the followers
Of One who cried, " Leave all and follow me."
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from heaven,
Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the Mighty God,
Count the more base idolater of the two;
Crueller, as not passing thro' the fire

Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro' the smoke,
The blight of low desires—darkening thine own
To thine own likeness; or if one of these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and fair—
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one
By those who most have cause to sorrow for her—
Fairer than Rachael by the palmy well,
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she seem'd,
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.
For so mine own was brightened—where indeed
The roof so lowly but that beam of heaven
Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the babe
Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame,
The common care whom no one cared for, leapt
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
As with the mother he had never known,
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
Had such a star of morning in their blue,
That all neglected places of the field
Broke into nature's music when they saw her.
Low was her voice, but won mysterious way
Thro' the sealed ear to which a louder one
Was all but silence—free of alms her hand—
The hand that robed your cottage-walls with flowers
Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;

How often placed upon the sick man's brow
Cool'd it; or laid his feverish pillow smooth!
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
One burthen and she would not lighten it?
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?
Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,
How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,
And steal you from each other! for she walk'd
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!
And one—of him I was not bid to speak—
Was always with her, whom you also knew.
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.
And these had been together from the first;
They might have been together till the last.
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,
May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
Without the captain's knowledge; hope with me.
Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame?
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,
'My house is left unto me desolate.'"

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but some,
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those
That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd
At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldierlike,
Erect; but when the preacher's cadence flow'd
Softening thro' all the gentle attributes
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,
Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;
And " O pray God that he hold up!" she thought,
" Or surely I shall shame myself and him."

" Nor yours the blame—for who beside your hearths
Can take her place—if echoing me you cry
'Our house is left unto us desolate'?
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood
The things belonging to thy peace and ours!
Is there no prophet but the voice that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste 'Repent'?
Is not our own child on the narrow way,
Who down to those that saunter in the broad
Cries, 'Come up hither,' as a prophet to us?
Is there no stoning save with flint and rock?
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—
No desolation but by sword and fire?
Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier, for my loss.
Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,
Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.
But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek,

Exceeding 'poor in spirit'—how the words
Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean
Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd my voice
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine
To inflame the tribes; but there—out yonder—earth
Lightens from her own central hell—O, there
The red fruit of an old idolatry—
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,
They cling together in the ghastly sack—
The land all shambles—naked marriages
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd France,
By shores that darken with the gathering wolf,
Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.
Is this a time to madden madness then?
Was this a time for these to flaunt their pride?
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as those
Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes
Ere the great death, shroud this great sin from all!
Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it.
O, rather pray for those and pity them,
Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd, bring
Their own grey hairs with sorrow to the grave—
Who broke the bond which they desired to break,
Which else had link'd their race with times to come—
Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,
Grossly contriving their dear daughter's good—

Poor souls, and knew not what they did, but sat
Ignorant, devising their own daughter's death!
May not that earthly chastisement suffice?
Have not our love and reverence left them bare?
Will not another take their heritage?
Will there be children's laughter in their hall
For ever and for ever, or one stone
Left on another, or is it a light thing
That I, their guest, their host, their ancient friend,
I made by these the last of all my race,
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried
Christ ere His agony to those that swore
Not by the temple but the gold, and made
Their own traditions God, and slew the Lord,
And left their memories a world's curse—'Behold,
Your house is left unto you desolate'?"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no more;
Long since her heart had beat remorselessly,
Her crampt-up sorrow pain'd her, and a sense
Of meanness in her unresisting life.
Then their eyes vext her; for on entering
He had cast the curtains of their seat aside—
Black velvet of the costliest—she herself
Had seen to that. Fain had she closed them now,
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
Her husband inch by inch, but when she laid,
Wife-like, her hand in one of his, he veil'd

His face with the other, and at once, as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell
The woman shrieking at his feet, and swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty years.
And her the lord of all the landscape round
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways
Stumbling across the market to his death,
Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the door;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate
Save under pall with bearers. In one month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,
The childless mother went to seek her child;
And when he felt the silence of his house
About him, and the change and not the change,
And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors
Staring for ever from their gilded walls
On him their last descendant, his own head
Began to droop, to fall. The man became

Imbecile; his one word was " desolate."
Dead for two years before his death was he;
But when the second Christmas came, escaped
His keepers, and the silence which he felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom
By wife and child; nor wanted at his end
The dark retinue reverencing death
At golden thresholds; nor from tender hearts,
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,
And the broad woodland parcell'd into farms;
And where the two contrived their daughter's good,
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,
The hedgehog underneath the plantain bores,
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

Sea Dreams

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred;
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child—
One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old.
They, thinking that her clear germander eye
Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,
Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea;
For which his gains were dock'd, however small.
Small were his gains, and hard his work; besides,
Their slender household fortunes—for the man
Had risk'd his little—like the little thrift,
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep.
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face
Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,
And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,
To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.
Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,
At close of day; slept, woke, and went the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
To chapel; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
Against the Scarlet Woman and her creed.
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd
"Thus, thus with violence," even as if he held
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
Were that great Angel; "Thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;
Then comes the close." The gentle-hearted wife
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;
He at his own; but when the wordy storm
Had ended, forth they came and paced the shore,
Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed—
The soot-flake of so many a summer still
Clung to their fancies—that they saw, the sea.
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,
Lingering about the thymy promontories,
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,
And rosed in the east; then homeward and to bed;
Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope,
Haunting a holy text, and still to that
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,
"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,"
Said, "Love, forgive him." But he did not speak;
And silenced by that silence lay the wife,

Remembering her dear Lord who died for all,
And musing on the little lives of men,
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks
Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd and woke
The mother, and the father suddenly cried,
"A wreck, a wreck!" then turn'd and groaning said:

"Forgive! How many will say, 'Forgive,' and find
A sort of absolution in the sound
To hate a little longer! No; the sin
That neither God nor man can well forgive,
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?
Too ripe, too late! they come too late for use.
Ah, love, there surely lives in man and beast
Something divine to warn them of their foes;
And such a sense, when first I fronted him,
Said, 'Trust him not;' but after, when I came
To know him more, I lost it, knew him less,

Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity,
Sat at his table, drank his costly wines,
Made more and more allowance for his talk;
Went further, fool! and trusted him with all,
All my poor scrapings from a dozen years
Of dust and desk-work. There is no such mine,
None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars
Ruin—a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"
Said the good wife, "if every star in heaven
Can make it fair; you do but hear the tide.
Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
And I from out the boundless outer deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one
Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.
I thought the motion of the boundless deep
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved upon it
In darkness; then I saw one lonely star
Larger and larger. 'What a world,' I thought,
'To live in!' but in moving on I found
Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond;
And near the light a giant woman sat,

All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand. Then out I slipt
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird that sings;
And here the night-light flickering in my eyes
Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she said,
"Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,
"And mused upon it, drifting up the stream
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that still
The motion of the great deep bore me on,
And that the woman walk'd upon the brink.
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of it.
'It came,' she said, 'by working in the mines.'
O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her head.
And then the motion of the current ceased,
And there was rolling thunder; and we reach'd
A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns;
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill
Trod out a path. I follow'd, and at top
She pointed seaward; there a fleet of glass,
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud

That not one moment ceased to thunder, past
In sunshine. Right across its track there lay,
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
Or what seem'd gold; and I was glad at first
To think that in our often-ransack'd world
Still so much gold was left; and then I fear'd
Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off;
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet—
I thought I could have died to save it—near'd,
Touch'd, clink'd, and vanish'd, and I woke,
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see
My dream was Life, the woman honest Work,
And my poor venture but a fleet of glass
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to comfort him,
"You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke
The glass with little Margaret's medicine in it;
And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream.
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

" No trifle," groan'd the husband; " yesterday
I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd
That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.
Like her, he shook his head. ' Show me the books!'
He dodged me with a long and loose account.
' The books, the books!' but he, he could not wait,
Bound on a matter he of life and death;

When the great Books—see Daniel seven and ten—
Were open'd, I should find he meant me well;
And then began to bloat himself, and ooze
All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean. 'My dearest friend,
Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,' said he;
'And all things work together for the good
Of those'—it makes me sick to quote him—last
Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.
I stood like one that had received a blow.
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you; then my eyes
Pursued him down the street, and far away,
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?" said the good wife;
"So are we all; but do not call him, love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd.
And that drags down his life; then comes what comes
Hereafter; and he meant, he said he meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well."

"'With all his conscience and one eye askew'—
Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn
A man is likewise counsel for himself,
Too often, in that silent court of yours—
'With all his conscience and one eye askew,
So false, he partly took himself for true;
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
Who, never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain,
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,
And snake-like slimed his victim ere he gorged;
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest
Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and Heaven,
To spread the word by which himself had thriven.'
How like you this old satire?"

"Nay," she said,
"I loathe it; he had never kindly heart,
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one
That altogether went to music? Still
It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast.—

But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour, lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd, a ridge
Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
Grew with the growing note, and when the note
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on those cliffs
Broke, mixt with awful light—the same as that
Living within the belt—whereby she saw
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,
But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
One after one; and then the great ridge drew,
Lessening to the lessening music, back,
And past into the belt and swell'd again
Slowly to music. Ever when it broke
The statues, king, or saint, or founder fell;
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
Came men and women in dark clusters round,
Some crying, "Set them up! they shall not fall!"
And others, "Let them lie, for they have fall'n."
And still they strove and wrangled; and she grieved
In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find
Their wildest wailings never out of tune
With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks

Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
Returning, while none marked it, on the crowd
Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away
The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,
To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt
My wistful eyes on two fair images,
Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—
The Virgin Mother standing with her child
High up on one of those dark minster-fronts—
Till she began to totter, and the child
Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,
And my dream awed me;—well—but what are dreams?
Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,
And mine but from the crying of a child."

"Child? No!" said he, "but this tide's roar, and his,
Our Boanerges with his threats of doom
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms—
Altho' I grant but little music there—
Went both to make your dream; but if there were
A music harmonising our wild cries,
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,
Why, that would make our passions far too like
The discords dear to the musician. No—
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven.

True devils with one ear, they howl in tune
With nothing but the devil!"

"'True' indeed!
One of our town, but later by an hour
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;
While you were running down the sands, and made
The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow flap,
Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news.
Why were you silent when I spoke to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the dead."

"Dead! who is dead?"

"The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease."

"Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart had he
To die of? dead!"

"Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge him with,
His angel broke his heart. But your rough voice—
You spoke so loud—has roused the child again.

Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep
Without her 'little birdie'? well, then, sleep,
And I will sing you 'birdie.'"

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the night
Her other, found—for it was close beside—
And half-embraced the basket cradle-head
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and nestling, sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby-song:

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger,
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger;
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

" She sleeps; let us too, let all evil, sleep.
He also sleeps—another sleep than ours.
He can do no more wrong; forgive him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,
" His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound;
I do forgive him!"

" Thanks, my love," she said,
" Your own will be the sweeter," and they slept.

Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exposition

I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's invention stored,
And praise the invisible universal Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the nations meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labour have outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

II

O silent father of our kings to be,
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks to thee!

III

The world-compelling plan was thine—
And, lo! the long laborious miles
Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,
Rich in model and design;

Harvest-tool and husbandry,
Loom and wheel and enginery,
Secrets of the sullen mine,
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,
Polar marvels, and a feast
Of wonder, out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art divine!
All of beauty, all of use,
That one fair planet can produce,
  Brought from under every star,
Blown from over every main,
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
  The works of peace with works of war.

IV

Is the goal so far away?
Far, how far no tongue can say,
Let us dream our dream to-day.

V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,
From growing commerce loose her latest chain,
And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden hours;
Till each man find his own in all men's good,

International Exhibition Ode

And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth and crown'd with
all her flowers.

A Welcome to Alexandra

March 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers!
Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!
Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!

A Welcome to Alexandra

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher
Melt into stars for the land's desire!
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,
And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,
The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—
O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your own;
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever it be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!

The Grandmother

I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written; she never was over-wise,
Never the wife for Willy; he would n't take my advice.

II

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
Had n't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
Eh!—but he would n't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
Never a man could fling him, for Willy stood like a rock.
"Here 's a leg for a babe of a week!" says Doctor; and he would be bound
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
I ought to have gone before him; I wonder he went so young.
I cannot cry for him, Annie; I have not long to stay;
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old.
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
I mean your grandfather, Annie; it cost me a world of woe,
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
That Jenny had tript in her time; I knew, but I would not tell.
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
But the tongue is a fire, as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week
and a day;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle
of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself
clean.

X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an even-
ing late
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road
at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupt
the nightingale.

XI

All of a sudden he stopt; there past by the gate of the
farm
Willy,—he did n't see me,—and Jenny hung on his
arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew
how;
Ah, there 's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry
now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, make me a mocking curtsey and went.
And I said, "Let us part; in a hundred years it 'll be all the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:
"Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand; we too shall be happy still."

XIV

"Marry you, Willy!" said I, "but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you 'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, "No, love, no;"
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

XV

So Willy and I were wedded. I wore a lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers
a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was
born;
Shadow and shine in life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of
death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a
breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a
wife;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought
for his life.

XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or
pain;
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been
in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another
morn;
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead be-
fore he was born.

XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay.
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way;
Never jealous—not he. We had many a happy year;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died;
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget;
But as to the children, Annie, they 're all about me yet.

XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you;
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team;
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII

And yet I know for a truth there 's none of them left alive,
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five;
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh three-score and ten;
I knew them all as babies, and now they 're elderly men.

XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve;
And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad;
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease;
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV

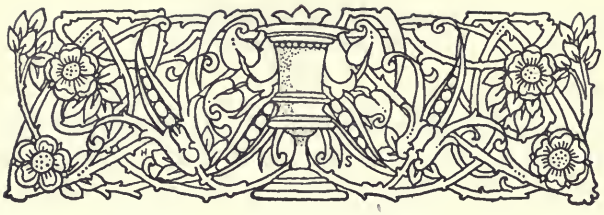
And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that 's all, and long for rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vext?

XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie; thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
But stay with the old woman now; you cannot have long to stay.



Northern Farmer

Old Style

I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy, Doctor 's abeän an' agoän;
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle, but I beänt a fool;
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to break my rule.

II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what 's nawways true;
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I 've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.

Northern Farmer

"The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you[1] to 'issén, my friend," a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin 'awaäy loike a buzzard-clock[2] ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

[1] *ou* as in *hour.* [2] Cockchafer.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä:
" The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste;
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I ' a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysén;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,[1] fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies[2] afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.

[1] Bittern. [2] Anemones.

Northern Farmer

Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner[1] 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

x

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer 's lots o' feeäd.
Fourscoor[2] yows upon it, an' some on it down i' seeäd.[3]

xi

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,—
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

xii

Do Godamoighty knaw what a 's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;

[1] One or other. [2] *ou* as in *hour.* [3] Clover.

An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear, a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence;
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now,
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén, naw doubt, "What a man a beä sewer-loy!"
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squoire 's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;

Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a 's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

Northern Farmer

New Style

I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that 's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou 's an ass for thy païns;
Theer 's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs, nor in all thy braïns.

II

Woä—theer 's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse—
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?

Time to think on it then; for thou 'll be twenty to weeäk.[1]
Proputty, proputty—woä then, woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou 's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a-tellin' it me.
Thou 'll not marry for munny—thou 's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou 'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing the bells.
She 's a beauty, thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot 's a beauty?—the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

V

Do 'ant be stunt;[2] taäke time. I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?

[1] This week. [2] Obstinate.

But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

VI

An' I went where munny war; an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty—I niver giv it a thowt—
Bur warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e 's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle [1] her breäd.
Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curat, ean' weänt niver get hissén clear,
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.

[1] Earn.

An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd[1] yowe; fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä togither, as they've good right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laäid by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it; reäson why.

X

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt[2]—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.[3]

[1] Or, fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.

[2] Makes nothing. [3] The flies are as fierce as anything.

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what 's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty 's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I 'm blest
If it is n't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it 's the best.

XII

Tis 'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it 's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl 's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I 'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou 'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

XV

Thim 's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I meäns to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I 'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that 's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

In the Valley of Cauteretz

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

The Flower

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night;

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower."

The Flower

Read my little fable:
  He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now
  For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
  And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
  Call it but a weed.

Requiescat

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly, slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease,
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

The Sailor Boy

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
" O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

" The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play."

" Fool," he answer'd, " death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

The Sailor Boy

" My mother clings about my neck,
  My sisters crying, ' Stay for shame;'
My father raves of death and wreck,—
  They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

" God help me! save I take my part
  Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
  Far worse than any death to me."

The Islet

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,
For a score of sweet little summers or so?"
The sweet little wife of the singer said,
On the day that follow'd the day she was wed,
"Whither, O whither, love, shall we go?"
And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, "And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,
But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I know,
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd?
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairily-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,

And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the sun
The facets of the glorious mountain flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

" Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

" No, no, no!
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical throat,
And his compass is but of a single note,
That it makes one weary to hear."

" Mock me not! mock me not! love, let us go."

" No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens the blood,
And makes it a sorrow to be."

A Dedication

DEAR, near and true,—no truer Time himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
Shoots to the fall,—take this and pray that he
Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith in him,
May trust himself; and after praise and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable world,
Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
And after autumn past—if left to pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless days—
Draw toward the long frost and longest night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks a flower.[1]

[1] The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

Experiments

Boädicéa

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess
Far in the east Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

"They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?
Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!

Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.
There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.
Such is Rome, and this her deity; hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

"Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur hear aërially,

Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;
Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the refluent estuary;
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—
There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

"Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
Then I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony;
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses:
"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!

Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God."
So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

"Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
See, they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted Britoness—
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
Shout, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout, Coritanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously,
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.
Lo the colony, there they rooted in the city of Cúnobelíne!
There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they dwell no more.
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,

Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
Up, my Britons! on, my chariot! on, my chargers, trample them under us!"

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
So the silent colony, hearing her tumultuous adversaries
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,

Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted
away.
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous
agonies.
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous
legionary,
Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam,
Cámulodúne.

In Quantity

On Translations of Homer

(*Hexameters and Pentameters*)

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!
No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

Milton

(Alcaics)

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empryean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

(*Hendecasyllabics*)

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—

In Quantity

Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse

(*Iliad*, *viii.* 542–561)

SO Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd applause;
Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,
And each beside his chariot bound his own;
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine
And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd
Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain
Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.
And these all night upon the bridge[1] of war
Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed.
As when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars

[1] Or, ridge.

In Quantity

Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart;
So many a fire between the ships and stream
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
A thousand on the plain; and close by each
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

The Third of February, 1852

MY Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all
That England's honest censure went too far,
That our free press should cease to brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
To fling what e'er we felt, not fearing, into words.

We love not this French God, the child of Hell,
Wild War, who breaks the converse of the wise;
But though we love kind Peace so well,
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction lies.
It might be safe our censures to withdraw,
And yet, my Lords, not well; there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break.
No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe; we *must* speak,
That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,
There might be left some record of the things we said.

The Third of February, 1852

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.
  Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
  On her and us and ours for evermore.
What! have we fought for Freedom from our prime,
At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never fear'd.
  From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims.
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
  We flung the burthen of the second James.
I say, we *never* fear'd! and as for these,
We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people muse
  In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?
  Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?
O fall'n nobility that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,
  Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts—
If easy patrons of their kin
  Have left the last free race with naked coasts!
They knew the precious things they had to guard;
For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.

The Third of February, 1852

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,
  What England was, shall her true sons forget?
We are not cotton-spinners all,
  But some love England and her honour yet.
And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,
And hold against the world this honour of the land.

A Welcome to Her Royal Highness Marie Alexandrovna, Duchess of Edinburgh

March 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove for power—
Whose will is lord thro' all his world-domain—
Who made the serf a man, and burst his chain—
Has given our Prince his own imperial Flower,
Alexandrovna.
And welcome, Russian flower, a people's pride,
To Britain, when her flowers begin to blow!
From love to love, from home to home you go,
From mother unto mother, stately bride,
Marie Alexandrovna!

II

The golden news along the steppes is blown,
And at thy name the Tartar tents are stirr'd;

A Welcome to Marie Alexandrovna

Elburz and all the Caucasus have heard;
And all the sultry palms of India known,
Alexandrovna!
The voices of our universal sea
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,
The Maoris and that Isle of Continent,
And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,
Marie Alexandrovna!

III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty life!—
Yet Harold's England fell to Norman swords:
Yet thine own land has bow'd to Tartar hordes
Since English Harold gave its throne a wife,
Alexandrovna!
For thrones and peoples are as waifs that swing,
And float or fall, in endless ebb and flow,
But who love best have best the grace to know
That Love by right divine is deathless king,
Marie Alexandrovna!

IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger land,
Where men are bold and strongly say their say;—
See, empire upon empire smiles to-day,
As thou with thy young lover hand in hand,
Alexandrovna!

A Welcome to Marie Alexandrovna

So now thy fuller life is in the west,
  Whose hand at home was gracious to thy poor;
  Thy name was blest within the narrow door;
Here also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,
                Marie Alexandrovna!

v

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again?
  Or at thy coming, Princess, everywhere,
  The blue heaven break, and some diviner air
Breathe thro' the world and change the hearts of men,
                Alexandrovna?
But hearts that change not, love that cannot cease,
  And peace be yours, the peace of soul in soul!
  And howsoever this wild world may roll,
Between your peoples truth and manful peace,
                Alfred—Alexandrovna!

In the Garden at Swainston

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee;
Shadows of three dead men
Walk'd in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men, and thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods,
The Master was far away;
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day;
Still in the house in his coffin the Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee;
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be;
Three dead men have I loved, and thou art last of the three.

Child Songs

I

The City Child

DAINTY little maiden, whither would you wander?
Whither from this pretty home, the home where mother dwells?
"Far and far away," said the dainty little maiden,
"All among the gardens, auriculas, anemones,
Roses and lilies and Canterbury bells."

Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander?
Whither from this pretty house, this city house of ours?
"Far and far away," said the dainty little maiden,
"All among the meadows, the clover and the clematis,
Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-flowers."

II

Minnie and Winnie

Minnie and Winnie
  Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies!
  And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
  Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
  Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!
  Wake not soon!
Echo on echo
  Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars
  Peep'd into the shell.
"What are they dreaming of?
  Who can tell?"

Started a green linnet
  Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies!
  The sun is aloft!

The Spiteful Letter

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My name in song has done him much wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the times!
Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;
What room is left for a hater?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

The Spiteful Letter

Greater than I—is that your cry?
  And men will live to see it.
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;
  And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
  But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
  How I hate the spites and the follies!

Literary Squabbles

AH God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars;

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite;

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things here;

When one small touch of charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike state
Than if the crowded orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

The Victim

I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low;
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
"The Gods are moved against the land."
The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
"Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,—
Answer, O answer!—
We give you his life."

The Victim

II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with flame;
And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,
Till at last it seem'd that an answer came:
"The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life."

III

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
The King was hunting in the wild;
They found the mother sitting still;
She cast her arms about her child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years increased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold;
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
"The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the boy."

The Victim

IV

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand;
The mother said, " They have taken the child
To spill his blood and heal the land.
The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the lea;
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.
Thy have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest?
Or I, the wife?"

V

The King bent low, with hand on brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
" O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged for me."
The King was shaken with holy fear;
" The Gods," he said, " would have chosen well;
Yet both are near, and both are dear,
And which the dearest I cannot tell!"
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won:
" We have our dearest,
His only son!"

The Victim

VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the blow,
To the altar-stone she sprang alone:
"Me, not my darling, no!"
He caught her away with a sudden cry;
Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking, "*I* am his dearest, I—
I am his dearest!" rush'd on the knife.
And the Priest was happy:
"O, Father Odin,
We give you a life.
Which was his nearest?
Who was his dearest?
The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the wife!"

Wages

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she;
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky;
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

The Higher Pantheism

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains,—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendour and gloom.

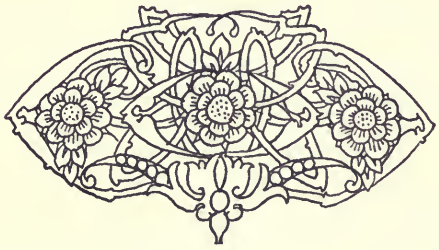
The Higher Pantheism

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit
can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and
feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a
pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man
cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not
He?



The Voice and the Peak

I

THE voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

II

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
" I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave, for I fall.

IV

" A thousand voices go
  To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are troubled,
  And moan and sink to their rest.

V

" The fields are fair beside them,
  The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they—they feel the desire of the deep—
  Fall, and follow their doom.

VI

" The deep has power on the height,
  And the height has power on the deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
  And sink again into sleep."

VII

Not raised for ever and ever,
  But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the star
  Pass, and are found no more.

VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd
  At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
  And the thought of a man is higher.

The Voice and the Peak

IX

A deep below the deep,
  And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
  And our seeing is not sight.

X

The voice and the Peak
  Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
  Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Lucretius

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morning flush
Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he loved her none the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from pacings in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austerely, for—his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the hexameter—he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not; but, wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broth

Confused the chemic labour of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells, and check'd
His power to shape. He loathed himself, and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried:

"Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain
Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

"Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what dreams!
For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking. Terrible: for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature: all her bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever. That was mine, my dream, I knew it—
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies

His function of the woodland; but the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

"Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Ilion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.

" Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,
Forgetful how my rich proœmion makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

" Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

" Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

" Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not her
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad;
Nor her that o 'er her wounded hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad

Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers;
Which things appear the works of mighty Gods.

" The Gods! and if I go *my* work is left
Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods!
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law? My master held
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I meant?
I have forgotten what I meant; my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

" Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use

All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter—tales! for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees;
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven.
And here he glances on an eye new-born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,
Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
Whether I mean this day to end myself,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit the post
Allotted by the Gods. But he that holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
And wretched age—and worst disease of all,
These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
The phantom husks of something foully done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,
And blasting the long quiet of my breast
With animal heat and dire insanity?

"How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

"Can I not fling this horror off me again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
At random ravage? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of men?

Lucretius

" But who was he that in the garden snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—
For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quivering—
The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun;
And here an Oread—how the sun delights
To glance and shift about her slippery sides,
And rosy knees and supple roundedness,
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way runs
Before the rest!—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows; but him I proved impossible;
Twy-natured is no nature. Yet he draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender.
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she
Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me—but will she fling herself
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-foot! nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leafless? or to whelm
All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you

Lucretius

From childly wont and ancient use I call—
I thought I lived securely as yourselves—
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice, none;
No larger feast than under plane or pine
With neighbours laid along the grass, to take
Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy—
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems some unseen monster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
Wrenching it backward into his, and spoils
My bliss in being; and it was not great,
For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—
What beast has heart to do it? And what man,
What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart,
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now!

" And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles—into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower.
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and plucks
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,

Shall stand. Ay, surely; then it fails at last
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they win—
Thus—thus—the soul flies out and dies in the air."

With that he drove the knife into his side.
She heard him raging, heard him fall, ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd. He answer'd, "Care not thou!
Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well!"

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